

# Tidings



A Monthly Publication from Trinity United Methodist Church, Tallahassee, FL

## All Are Welcome Here

by Rev. Dr. Matthew Williams, Lead Pastor

Some years ago, Joy and I were with her dear cousin, Kacie, outside of Springfield, Missouri. We were driving into the Amish country. Joy and I lived near traditional Mennonites in South Carolina, but we had never met Amish people or had seen the Amish country. So we drove outside of Springfield about 30 miles and found ourselves on a country road behind a horse and buggy.

Kacie was wearing a bright pink wind suit, and Joy and I were in coats and scarves. I mentioned to Kacie as we were driving slowly, “I wonder what it’s like, you know, to be Amish—to live this kind of life?” Well, being who she is, she said, “Let’s pull over and ask this guy on the buggy.”

What? We thought. Sure enough, she flagged down the guy on the buggy and asked him if he knew of anyone who would let us see their home. Reluctantly, he said with a little smile, “Maybe. Follow me, I am going to my blacksmith’s house.” We followed him. When we arrived, he told us to wait in the car. He got off of his buggy, and he and the blacksmith talked shop. The blacksmith stared at us a bit, but finally invited us out of the car. We explained ourselves: “Sir, we were just driving along and wondered what it would be like to meet an Amish family and tour an Amish home.” He stared at us for a few moments, then smiled at us, and took us on a tour of his dairy farm, showed us all of his turkeys, gave us a lesson in iron works, invited us into his home and introduced us to his family, showed us everything in the house, and then he sent us on our way. *(continued on next page)*

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### Memorial Gifts

Trinity received the following gifts from May 27-July 14:

#### Honorariums

- In honor of **Wayne and Ramona Wiatt** from Cynthia Smith.

#### Memorials

- In memory of **Ronald Lee Baker** from Mary Margaret Rogers.
- In memory of **Susie Brierton** from her Sunday School Class.
- In memory of **Thomas Ott** from Ann Blackwood, Donna and Hubert Smith, Debra Christie, Michael and Nancy Harrell, and W Advisors – Larry Lombardo, Angela Cox and Bobby Wade.

(*All Are Welcome Here*, continued)



We never learned the Amish man's name. Yet, we will never forget how he treated us.

He invited us into his home,  
Introduced us to his family,  
Showed us around the house,  
And sent us on our way.

His actions mimicked the actions of Jesus that we see throughout scripture. Jesus welcomed total strangers in ways that made them feel right at home. Even when Jesus offered challenges to people, he often did it in the form of a parable. He gave them something to think about and to reflect upon.

The Amish family truly gave us something to ponder. They were supportive of one another, and their affection for one another radiated from their faces. When the mother of the household escorted us to her screened porch, where she had covered the food with cloth in between meals, her demeanor shined brightly with pride over her delicate creations. She then lined up the children like the Von Trapps' offspring, introducing them to us from oldest to youngest. The children then ran and laughed (they may have been laughing at us!) as they were seeing intimately a kind of people they don't see much of—especially Kacie in the pink wind suit!

Similar to this family, we, the Church, invite people into our home on the corner of Park and Duval streets. Through our worship of God together, we introduce people to our family and to our faith. Through our numerous ministries, we show people around our house, and from the Eucharistic table, we are sent on our way to be the hands, feet, and body of Jesus in the world. And all are welcome here as we continue to be built into God's house. As the hymn writer, Marty Haugen, faithfully pens:

*Let us build a house where love can dwell  
And all can safely live,  
A place where saints and children tell  
How hearts learn to forgive;  
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,  
Rock of faith and vault of grace;  
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions:  
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place*

*Let us build a house where prophets speak,  
And words are strong and true,  
Where all God's children dare to seek  
To dream God's reign anew.  
Here the cross shall stand as witness  
And as symbol of God's grace:  
Here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:  
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place*

*Let us build a house where love is found  
In water, wine and wheat:  
A banquet hall on holy ground,  
Where peace and justice meet  
Here the love of God, through Jesus  
Is revealed in time and space;  
As we share in Christ the feast that frees us:  
All are welcome, all are welcome  
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place\**

There is no doubt that our local community, nation, as well as nations around the world, are longing to experience something real and meaningful in their lives. In the midst of war and turmoil, people have an innate sense that we are created for more than harming one another. As followers of Christ, we believe that this meaningful life comes from the liberty and freedom that are found in Jesus the Christ. This is why we worship and this is why we serve. We long for others to experience the same experience that makes us who we are. Deep down inside, we know that Christ liberates us to a joyous life and gives us strength when we experience our most difficult situations.

Trinity United Methodist Church is a community of persons that offers the love of God in Christ Jesus to the world. When people drive by our beautiful church campus, I pray that the Spirit of God radiates in a way that leads people to ask this question: "I wonder what it's like, you know, to be a part of Trinity United Methodist—to live this kind of life?" And then may they say: "Let me pull over and ask."

\* Haugen, Marty. *All Are Welcome*, GIA Publications. 1994. Reprinted with permission.



# Welcome (Back), Candace Duclos!

by Stacey Duggar, Preschool Director

I had the privilege of working with Candace for 13 years when she was our VPK/four-year-old teacher in the preschool (2009 – 2012). I am overjoyed that she is returning to Trinity as the children's ministry director, and I look forward to working with her. I just know you are going to love her enthusiasm and dedication to the job!

I sat down with Candace to ask her a few questions to help you all get to know her better.

## 1. Where were you born?

Right outside of Washington, D.C. in Suitland, Maryland.

## 2. Tell us a little about your family.

Chris and I have been married for 26 years. We came to Tallahassee as FSU students and stayed. We have four children—Hannah, Wyatt, Chase, and Sarah. Our oldest daughter, Hannah, married Oz Stelter in October of 2021 in a beautiful ceremony held in the sanctuary at Trinity. They now live in Falmouth, Massachusetts, where Hannah serves as the children's and youth director at John Wesley United Methodist Church. Both of our sons, Wyatt and Chase, are students at FSU, and Sarah is a rising junior at Lincoln High.

I worked at Trinity United Methodist Preschool while my children were attending the preschool. My kids enjoyed Trinity's NETkids, and we soon found ourselves making Trinity our home church.

## 3. What is your educational background?

I am a graduate of FSU with a BS in elementary education and an MS in reading education. I have taught preschool and kindergarten for the last 25 years.

## 4. Why/how did you feel led to apply for this position?

Working with children of all ages is something I enjoy. I love watching children learn new concepts, apply ideas, and question the world around them. As an educator, I have felt very privileged to be a small part of a child's learning journey. This position called to me because I felt led to use my skills not just for academic learning but to encourage and lead children to develop a personal relationship with Jesus. My goal is for each child at Trinity to know that they are loved by God and this church family.



*The Duclos family at daughter Hannah's wedding. Candace is second from the right.*

## 5. What do you like to do when you are not working?

Reading, baking, or enjoying time at our family lake house.

## 6. What is your favorite Bible verse?

"Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, loving one another..." Ephesians 4:32. This one is my favorite because it is the foundation upon which I strive to live. It reminds me to be kind to everyone I meet and to remember my only goal today is to love others. (Stacey: I remember Candace teaching her children this verse each year when she worked at the preschool.)

## 7. Do you have a funny story to share about working with kids?

So MANY! One of my favorite ones happened this past year. The children ask me how old I am all the time. My standard reply is "106"—to which one of my darlings shouted—"WOW!! You don't have ANY wrinkles!"

## 8. What are you most looking forward to as you rejoin the staff at Trinity?

Returning to Trinity feels like coming home. I am looking most forward to working with the children and volunteers. Relationships are essential to our program. I cannot wait to work with those who are led to work with us as we continue to grow a fabulous program.

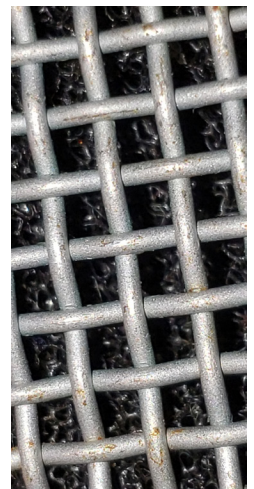
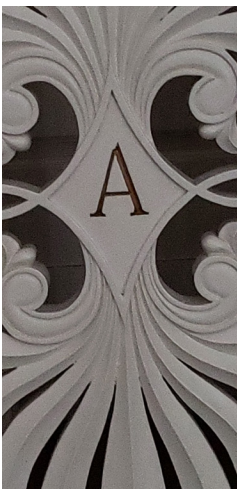
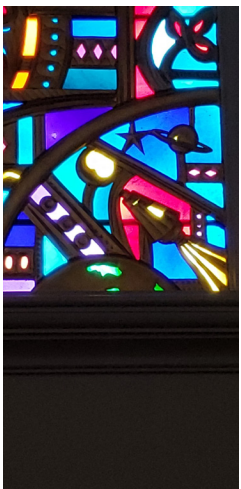
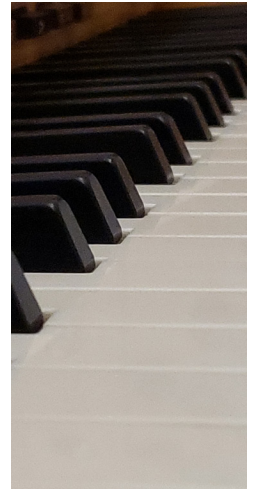
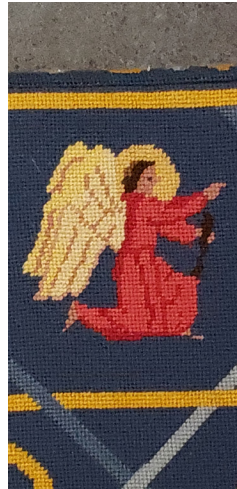
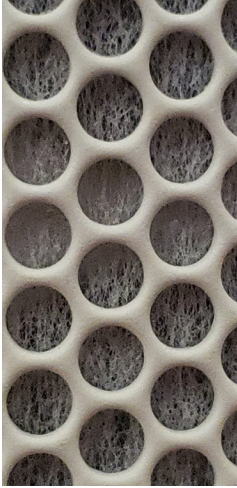


# A Matter of Perspective

*by Brett Ingram, Facility Director*

Quite often when people are accustomed to seeing things on a regular basis, they tend to get complacent and overlook or lose appreciation of the beauty that is right in front of them. Now and again looking at things from a different angle can allow someone to think differently about it. Sometimes seeing things differently can help us better understand the world around us. This is not only true in what we observe on a day-by-day basis but can also cross-over to how we live. From time to time, try looking from a different perspective.

Here is a game you can play the next time you are at Trinity. See if you can identify what is in the following pictures and where each is located around the church. Looking forward to “seeing” you in church!





# Meet Sofia Fernandez

Hi church family! My name is Sofia Fernandez and I have been so blessed and honored to serve as the Director of Youth Ministries & Modern Worship at Trinity for the past few weeks. I was raised in Winter Garden, Florida where I studied the arts, choral music, and conducting from an early age. My first worship leading experience was my sophomore year of high school. As soon as I started, I knew that music ministry was going to be something I did for the rest of my life. Musical worship and community encouraged so much of my spiritual formation, and my hope as a worship leader is to pass that gift on to others as well.

I moved to Tallahassee in 2017 and earned my B.A. in commercial music and entrepreneurship from FSU in 2020. In my past 3 years of full-time ministry, I have grown a deep passion for embodying Christ to those who experience life in the margins. This upcoming August, I will begin my M.Div. in theology & Christian ethics.

The Scripture that best describes why I lead worship would be Romans 12:1. It is by the mercy and grace of God that we are able to worship Him freely and wholly. Not only in our song, but with our lives. My hope as I continue at Trinity is that our lives would increasingly be a witness to the God we worship and the songs we sing.

I am so grateful for everyone's warm welcomes and hospitality. If we have yet to meet in person, I am eagerly looking forward to meeting everyone! Peace and blessings!



## Treasured VBS

*by Allison Corrigan, former Director of Children's Ministries*

This summer, the week of June 6<sup>th</sup> brought the children of Trinity an amazing week of VBS fun, faith, and fellowship. Approximately 60 adult and youth volunteers helped create a wonderful, faith-filled experience for almost 90 children, ranging in age from three to 11 years old. This year's theme was "Treasured," where children discovered that they are each one of God's most priceless treasures. We learned how deeply God loves us, hears us, comforts us, knows us, and forgives us. The week's activities included four engaging stations that the children rotated through each day.



**Allison Corrigan and Lisa Boyd put on a science demonstration during VBS**



Bible Adventures is always a favorite, as it brings each day's Bible story to life in a very tangible way. KidVid Cinema allows children to connect with other children from around the world who are learning to follow Jesus in everyday life. Each story includes engaging discussion that allows children to open up and share their own stories, too. Imagination Station brings hands-on fun through the use of science gizmos such as noisy whirly gigs and thought-provoking decoders that put the day's Bible point into action—quite literally! Jungle Gym games allow children to interact with one another through running, jumping, splashing, and laughing! This terrific week would not have been possible without the amazing support of all the volunteers! Thank you so much for your service, love, and care.

# Serving with Love

by Catherine Altmeier, Trinity Youth Parent

For the past six years, Lisa Prasse has served as the youth director at Trinity United Methodist Church, and for the first five of those years, I was sitting on the edge of my seat with excitement, waiting for my daughter, Molly, to be old enough to be part of the youth program. I knew from experience how life-changing a thriving youth program can be for a young person, and I was confident that would certainly be the case for Molly as part of Lisa's youth program. And for the last year, I have seen the evidence of that expectation as Molly has grown as a person and as a follower of Christ in such deep, wonderful ways, thanks to Lisa's guidance.

Youth ministry, for Lisa, has clearly been a calling. You could see it in the excitement that she brought to every interaction with "her kids." You could see it in the seriousness and dedication she felt as she focused on helping these youth know Christ, His love, and what being a follower of Christ means for each of us. You could see it in how much fun she clearly had spending time with her youth, whether it be part of messy games or staying out past midnight at Universal. She loved (loves!) her youth like they are one of her own children, and I have never once seen her waver in her commitment to them.

When Molly finally became old enough to attend youth group this past summer, it was following two strange and difficult years. My daughter, like many kids their age, had *lots* of difficult questions, and Molly knew right away that Lisa was a safe and trusted

person to ask. I often rolled my eyes or tried to apologize to Lisa for the many, often complex, questions and scenarios that Molly would bring to her. But Lisa never once minded. She was there for Molly in any way they needed and always answered them with grace and love.

And that, I think, is what Lisa's time in youth ministry has been most about: love. Her love for these kids. Her love for God. And showing these kids how much bigger and more wonderful our lives can be when we love God and love others.

That is certainly what Lisa has shown Molly (and me). And while both Molly and I are sad that Lisa's time as the youth minister at Trinity has come to an end, we are so grateful for the time that she gave and are thrilled for her next steps because we know that, wherever she goes, she will continue to spread God's love and her own. That's just the person she is.

## Goodbye-ing Well

by Lisa Prasse, Youth Director

As I reach the end of my time as the youth director at Trinity, I am overwhelmed with fond memories. The past six years seem to have flown by, and there are so many precious relationships that have been fostered in that time. I thank God for the opportunity that I was given and the giant responsibility with which I was entrusted. I have been asked to reflect on some of the highlights of my time as youth director and being at Warren Willis this week, and with Youth Week on the horizon; this was an easy task! In an attempt to "good-bye well," I'll list just a few highlights here.

Beyond a doubt, my favorite times were those spent with "my kids"/your youth. It didn't much matter what we were doing—I just love being with them. All of them. Even on the tough days. Your kids are tremendous human beings. Every mission trip—working hard with Servants in Faith and Technology (SIFAT) in Alabama to Eleuthera in the Bahamas—we were learning one another. We were growing our relationships with one another, our relationships with God, and sharing His love with the world—what a life-giving treasure. We came together to work, sing, and dance during VBS. We came together to play—riding roller coasters at Rock the



Lisa Prasse (back) with the youth group



Universe, snow skiing on ski retreat, and playing in the waves during beach retreats. We would go hungry together during our 30-Hour Famine events, we studied the Bible together during Wednesday night Bible Studies—even via Zoom as we rode out a global pandemic together; and we shared meals, games, and stories together during UMYF. We went through years of summer camp and exciting Youth Weeks together; we schlepped trees, celebrated holidays and major youth life events (confirmation, graduation), we laughed and cried together, and *we grew* (often far beyond our comfort zones)—together. During a particularly difficult time in my recent life, a dear friend reminded me, “We grow through what we go through,” and that’s what I was fortunate enough to do with your children these past six years. I wouldn’t trade one minute of it, and I’ll carry these memories in my heart always.

# Preschool Happenings

by Stacey Duggar, Preschool Director

**A**nother year begins for us at the preschool, our 49<sup>th</sup> to be exact! We are ready for a new group of kids as well as some new faces on our staff. New to the preschool, but hardly new to the congregation, is Lisa Prasse. Lisa joins the preschool as a teacher in one of our three-year-old classrooms. Lisa brings with her an abundance of experience working with children, and we are looking forward to her gifts being put to use with us. We have some new teacher assistants who will also be joining the staff; please join me in welcoming Silvia Villagomez, Lexi Davis, and Allison Corrigan.

Other staff news to note is the marking of 10 years of employment by Jennifer Hopgood. Jennifer has worked in both the two and three-year-old classrooms and does an amazing job with our kids! I am finishing up 25 years at the preschool! I taught in both the two and three-year-old classrooms before assuming director responsibilities in 2004. It is a joy and honor to lead this ministry.

All in all, we have 22 staff members working in the preschool providing a loving and nurturing environment for 75 children, aged three months to five years old. We welcome your prayers as we begin another school year.

## BFC Ministry Programs Continue All Summer Long!

by Beth Curry, BFC Team Leader

**W**hat a summer it’s been! Due to the excessive heat and the rising Covid numbers, BFC Ministry had to change plans a bit mid-summer, but BFC Exercise and BFO (Becoming Fit Outdoors) haven’t skipped a beat.

**BFC Exercise** – In July the BFC Exercise program went back to Zoom only classes due to CDC raising Leon County’s Covid Community Level to High/Red and recommending masks for indoor activities—but that didn’t stop us from having fun and getting a good workout! There are still six weekly classes via Zoom for beginner to advanced (and as soon as it’s safe, the in-person option will be offered again).



**BFO (Becoming Fit Outdoors) Walking/Hiking** – Once the heat index hit one hundred, BFO Walking/Hiking switched to a cooler (and much safer) option—pool exercise! It’s been a blast working out with pool noodles and balls and learning about the Mediterranean Diet. Summer Session #2 started July 21 and runs through September 7, meeting for an hour each week on Thursday at 6:30 p.m. Come join us for a walk (weather permitting)—or pool exercise at the Drake’s house. (Knowing how to swim is not necessary.)

Registration in advance is required for both BFC Exercise and BFO. Please visit the [Trinity website](#) for class descriptions, program and donation information, or email [BFCSeries@yahoo.com](mailto:BFCSeries@yahoo.com) for registration forms and/or Zoom links. Since things change each week, keep an eye on the weekly *News & Notes* email from Trinity each Tuesday for the most current information for both BFC Exercise and BFO.

## Do You Like Music?

Consider joining one of Trinity’s vocal and instrumental ensembles. We have openings in all of our groups. You do not have to attend every rehearsal or have a degree in music; you just need to have a heart of service and offer your best (though it also helps to be able to match pitches with others when singing in a choir). Contact Christopher Titko at [ctitko@tumct.org](mailto:ctitko@tumct.org) or 862-221-1432.



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## WORSHIP SERVICES

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Early Service: 8:30 a.m. in the sanctuary  
SUN Service (contemporary worship): 9:45 a.m. in Moor Hall  
Traditional Service: 11 a.m. in the sanctuary

SUN Service and 11 a.m. Service are live streamed  
Please visit [www.tumct.org](http://www.tumct.org) for viewing links

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## PASTORAL STAFF

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Rev. Dr. Matthew Williams, *Lead Pastor*  
Rev. Bryant Manning, *Interim Associate Pastor*  
Dr. Nick Quinton, *Director of Discipleship and Adult Ministries*  
Rev. Wayne Curry, *Minister of Pastoral Care*

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## MINISTRY STAFF

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Dawn Adams, *Congregational Administrator*  
Laurie Atteberry, *Business Administrator*  
Ben Armstead, *Sexton*  
Viktor Billa, *Organist*  
Gabriela Denton, *Communications Coordinator*  
Candace Duclos, *Director of Children's Ministries*  
Stacey Duggar, *Preschool Director*  
Sofia Fernandez, *Contemporary Worship Leader*

Melanie Gonzalez, *Office Administrator*  
Brett Ingram, *Facility Director*  
Mike Kasper, *Live Stream Coordinator*  
Patti Groh, *Sexton*  
Amy Leach, *Programs Assistant*  
Charlotte Mathews, *Sexton*  
Lisa Prasse, *Youth Director*  
Chris Titko, *Director of Music*

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## TIDINGS TEAM

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[Gabriela Denton](#), *Editor*

[Pamela C. Crosby](#), *Technical Editor*

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